1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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entirely in caves; trading places called *wadia* near the caves, but out of sight of them, under a tree or rock, were used for bartering, where all strangers would stop and shout and then wait until their calls had been answered from the caves.

The Veddas were extremely jealous of their women, and intimate as our informant was with them as a young man, he was never taken to their caves while their women were there. The wilder Veddas could not count, at least they used no numerals beyond one, the method being to say "one" "and one" "and one," etc., probably putting a piece of stick on the ground or making a mark for each unit mentioned. Both hands with fingers extended were held up for ten, or perhaps for any number above six. The "silent trade" was only a tradition even among the wildest Veddas and had probably been extinct in this part of the country for at least two generations. The wilder Veddas had no areca nuts but chewed the bark of trees mixed with lime which they obtained by burning land shells which they called *wantako*.

Cousin marriage took place, the unions being arranged by the parents of the young people. Honey, dried venison and flesh of the monitor lizard were brought by the young man to the girl's father[1], who would call his daughter and give her in charge of her husband, for whom she would immediately make a waist string (*dia lauwwa*). She made no pretence of running away from her husband. Widows married an unmarried brother of their first husband if this were possible, in any case they might remarry and their sexual morality was as high as that of unmarried girls.

The wilder Veddas of the district belonged to the Morane and Unapane *waruge*; each clan had its own set of caves, though, since their members intermarried, there could have been no rigid exclusiveness about the arrangement. There were people of Uru *waruge* at a little distance; their status was lower than that of the Morane and Unapane folk, neither of whom would marry into this clan, and it was even said that the men of

[1] It was not clear whether more than one formal present of food was made; it must be remembered that a youth always gives part of any important kill to his potential father-in-law, cf. p. 67.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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which the food for the community was cooked, but we do not think they would touch it or assist in any way in the cooking. At Omuni a menstruous woman is isolated under a rough shelter where she is waited upon by a younger unmarried sister or cousin who, it was stated, should not herself have attained puberty. During her seclusion she may eat any food cooked at the ordinary fire, but a special platter is kept for her use. The girls who look after her suffer no restrictions. This happens every time a girl or woman menstruates.

Marriage takes place at an early age; it was said that girls sometimes married before puberty, and as we heard of this at Henebedda, Bandaraduwa, and Omuni, we see no reason to doubt the truth of the statement[1]. At Omuni it was pointed out that a certain amount of breast development was necessary before marriage, so that it is probable that connection does not antedate puberty by more than a short time.

With regard to the frequency of such child marriages, we can only say that we never saw any very young girls with babies. Perhaps at the present day prenuptial connection is more common than marriage between the very young, though it is obviously difficult to decide when prenuptial love-making between individuals destined for each other gives place to marriage, among people whose marriages are accompanied with but slight ceremony. It must be remembered that the marriage gift of landed or personal property to a son-in-law, which was formerly customary, is obsolescent at the present day, and this not only makes it more difficult to determine whether marriage has taken place, but probably actually tends to make the exact time of the assumption of the married state less clearly defined.

On account of these considerations we are unable to express any definite opinion as to the frequency of prenuptial connection, the few instances we heard of were between individuals occupying the relationship of *hura* and *naena*, who would in any case marry each other. Thus Kaira of Henebedda and his wife grew up in the same group, and as they had played together as

[1] We are indebted to Mr Frederick Lewis for the information that this is a common practice among Tamils.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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father's sister's daughter. The children of two sisters or of two brothers could not marry, and such a connection would be considered incestuous. The man goes to his future father-in-law with a present of honey, yams, grain or dried deer's flesh tied to his unstrung bow which he uses as a carrying stick. Whether he generally repeats this visit or receives his bride immediately was not clear, and probably the custom varies in this particular. Handuna of Godatalawa told us that he did not take his bride away until he had twice taken a present of food to his mother's brother (father-in-law). The bride gives her spouse a waist string of her own making which he never removes until it is worn out, when he replaces it with another made by his wife. In these particulars the marriage ceremony was essentially similar fifty years ago when it was described by Bailey. "The bachelor Veddah who meditates matrimony, himself selects the lady of his choice, wisely preferring his own judgement to that of others; and providing himself with the greatest 'delicacies of the season,' for example, a pot of honey and a dried iguano, proceeds to her father's hut and states the object of his visit. There being no objection to the proposed alliance, the father calls his daughter, who comes forth with a cord of her own twisting in her hand. She ties this round the bridegroom's waist, and they are man and wife. The man always wears this string. Nothing would induce him to part with it. When it wears out it is the wife's duty to twist a new one and bind it round him[1]."

When a girl married, her father usually made over to his son-in-law a tract of land, generally a hill known to be inhabited by colonies of the *bambara* or rock bee (*Apis indica*), or gave him a piece of personal property such as a bow or one or two arrows. The instances in which land was given are described in the section on land transference, so that here it is only necessary to mention instances in which personal property was given. Handuna received a bow and one arrow from his father-in-law who when presenting them accompanied his gift with the remark "With this bow you must get food for my daughter." Sometimes a dog is given, and Knox was certainly right when he

[1] J. Bailey, *op. cit.* p. 293.

1;Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
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583 431 said "For portions with their Daughters in marriage they give hunting Dogs." Among the village Veddas of Bintenne we heard that an axe or catty was sometimes given, though the Arachi of Belligala, who has been much in contact with the Dambani Veddas, stated that these sometimes presented land to their sons-in-law.

In one settlement of village Veddas, Bulugahaladena, we were told that the bridegroom takes a first present to the bride's father and leaves his bow and arrow in his hut until his second visit with further presents some four days later. At the same place the waist string is sometimes charmed to ensure constancy. Among many of the village Veddas the custom of the gift of the waist string is dying out, and the bridegroom gives the bride a cloth as is the custom among the Sinhalese.

Another custom now dying out appears to be the gift from the bridegroom to the bride of a lock of hair, presented at the same time as the food to the girl's father.

302 We discovered at Bendiyagalge that it is a common practice for women to wear false hair. Here we were told that it was merely worn in order to make the knot look important, but only by married women. It is improbable that the habit should have arisen among a people so careless of personal appearance as are the Veddas had it no other significance than adornment, for it must be remembered that these folk never brush or oil their hair, or even wash it; indeed, some consider the last operation extremely dangerous, so that the ornamental value of a very small wisp of hair may reasonably be doubted. Extra locks of hair are worn by Sinhalese women, and we have seen some hanging in the verandah of a mud hut in a small jungle village, but among them it is a very different matter. They are usually, and very rightly, proud of their masses of long glossy hair, which they comb and oil carefully. A naturally large knot is considered a beauty, especially when stabbed with a jewelled pin, and girls as well as married women will wear an extra lock to produce this effect, but that the custom should have been introduced from the Sinhalese with no other object than that of personal adornment, about which the Veddas seem to care so little[1], seems as improbable as does the

[1] The Vedda attitude towards ornament generally is treated on p. 303.

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

Nevill has pointed out that besides the territory of the group which is common land, every Vedda has "within this...a subdivision of his own which compares with the manor." In this he is no doubt right, though it was only at Sitala Wanniya that we were able to trace even approximately the hunting grounds belonging to individuals, which are theirs for the whole of their life, and descend to their heirs unless voluntarily alienated with the full consent of the group. So well is private ownership in a portion of land belonging to the group recognised in this community, that a man would not hunt even on his brother's land without the latter's permission; and if game started and wounded on his own land were killed on another man's domain, the man on whose territory the animal died would be given a portion of the flesh, apparently that side of the animal which touched the ground as the animal lay dead. Among other Veddas it was said half, or more generally a quarter, of the animal belonged to the man on whose land it died.

At Sitala Wanniya we not only found particular hills regarded as the property of individuals, but besides the big cave Pihilegodagalge, which was the property of the whole group of five families, there were smaller caves which were the property of the heads of individual families to which no others would have been welcomed, even had they thought of intruding. An exception was, however, made in the case of a man's *baena* (son-in-law), who we were told would naturally come and go as he pleased.

As has been shown in the chapter on Family Life, presents are often given at marriage, and these may take the form of personal property or hills or pools. In this section we shall deal with such transfers of real property, which in normal circumstances were made only to children and sons-in-law, and even then were not made over without the assent of every adult male member of the group. As this difficult subject does not lend itself to a general description, we shall limit ourselves to giving actual instances of land transfer with which we became acquainted.

When Vela of Sitala Wanniya married a woman of Bingoda his father-in-law gave him a piece of land in Marniye *pangua*

1:Seligmann & Seligmann E-5 (1907-1908) 1911
AX5 Vedda AX5

with a hill on it containing a cave called Marniyegalge and a number of *bambara* colonies. He was also given a number of pools in a river in Damenegama[1].

Handuna of Godatalawa on his marriage was given a hill with a cave in it called Balatgalagalge. This was handed over to him by his father-in-law and the gift carried with it the sole right to take rock honey on the hill, which was known to be the home of six swarms of *bambara*. Kaira Hudubandar son-in-law of Handuna of Godatalawa received on his first marriage a big pool in the Tota Oya river.

When Kumi the sister of the Vidane of Bandaraduwa married Tissahami, the bride's parents made over to her the hill Rajahele near Walimbagala, upon which there were about ten *bambara* colonies. Kumi also received Nalle Kotanwala, a stretch or pool—we could not determine which—in the Kalugal Oya. They also gave her husband the hill called Kuda Rasahele upon which six combs of the rock bee were known.

When Badapisi married, her father gave her husband Sinawa a hill called Bala Attahele on which there were known to be eight *bambara* colonies and a pool called Adanewala in the Kalugal Oya.

Tissahami the Vidane of Bandaraduwa received on his marriage the hill Maha Yakini Hela, upon which there were over twenty known *bambara* colonies[2].

With regard to these gifts of land we must record that although a man divides his landed property equally between his children in preparation for his death, property given at marriage to a son-in-law is counted as the daughter's share when the time comes for a man to make his final disposition.

When the land belonging to a Vedda group was not defined by natural features, such as a stream or hill, a mark representing a man with a drawn bow was cut upon the trunks of trees along the boundary line. It is doubtful whether these marks are

[1] We believe this was a small stream, and the right to fish in it was not highly valued, partly perhaps because not many fish were caught, but also because Veddas do not often eat fish when they can get other flesh.

[2] The numbers of colonies of rock bees mentioned in these accounts are probably inaccurate, except perhaps in the case of the Bandaraduwa hills, for most Veddas became confused when attempting to count above five or six.

4:Lewis N-5 (ca. 1906-1918) 1919
AX5 Vedda AX5

of the bark of the Ritti (*Antiaris toxicaria*) for males, and a sort of leaf-skirt for the females.

No jewellery was worn by the males or females. Sometimes a necklace made of shells ("Bellan") was worn by the younger females, but such things as rings were unknown to the earlier Veddas.

They had no idea of time beyond the subdivision of the 24 hours into two divisions, viz., that of light and darkness. Other than this there was no computation except a man's knowledge of a certain striking event that happened in his "small time," but how long ago that was could not be stated.

The taking of a woman to wife required mainly the sanction of the girl's father, after which a few exchanges might be made in signification of the consent of parties. After this the man and woman lived together, while before they would not so much as dare speak to one another in public, unless related.

The age of the woman was invariably extremely youthful at the time of her "marriage," and even at the present day, notwithstanding the comparative civilization of the modern Vedda descendants, youthful marriages still prevail.

I found in response to my inquiries in all parts of the Vedda country that I visited, that 12 years was a common age for a girl to be taken to wife at. In one village I was present at an inquiry by a headman into a case where the girl was only 8. In this case the headman expressed the opinion that the marriage was "very bad."

My informant told me that with the Veddas there was no custom for the woman, when about to give birth to a child, to go to a separate house or hut for the purpose, but that this custom had only come in later.

Among the Veddas there was no such thing as prostitution, nor could I learn that there was polyandry.

The bearing age of women would be at about 14, that of puberty being a year earlier.

Women would have children up to about 28, and as might be expected from the condition of youthful cohabitation for one or two years prior to puberty, the proportion of males and females in a family would be pretty nearly equal. On

5: Spittel D-5 (ca. 1920) 1965 AX5 Vedda AX5

tail through a dorsal slit, partially separating the muscle mass from the caudal vertebrae, and introducing into the space thus formed stripe of fat from the animal's flank; the skin is then sewn over with bast strip and thorn, and the stuffed tail is roasted on embers and eaten forthwith, or smoked and put by for future use. 252 262 251

Young hornbills being full of fat are a special Vedda delicacy; nor is the helpless imprisoned mother spared. Even more cruel is the treatment by these merciless epicures of the young of the edible-nest swiftlet. I asked Kauwa what he did with these when out nesting. "Eat them," he said; "the eggs are small but tasty; and so are the young which cry 'ki-ki-ki' as we put them in the fire." 262

The Vedda custom of preserving venison in honey is well known. This is how it is done: Into a hollow in a rock a little honey is poured; to this is added a few pieces of venison cut up small (pork is unsuitable as the fat prevents permeation); more honey is then poured on, and more meat added; and so layer by layer, till honey and meat are well intermingled. A protecting slab is then placed over the mouth of the hole. 251

Boa fat is said to be good for fractures; the broken limb being wrapped in *riti* bark or cloth saturated with the heated oil. They say it takes a month and a half for a fracture to heal; and in this, show more good sense than certain credulous Sinhalese who assure one that their *vedaralas* can cure a fracture in the time it takes a pot of rice to boil! 752

Kauwa had many charms against wild beasts. The one for buffaloes made them bleed from mouth and nose and fall dead! If you saw a bear you should *think* the appropriate charm and tie a knot in your hair; only if the animal attacked should you shout the words. For the leopard, he had no charm: "Cha, what's the use of that," he said; "the animal is more frightened of us than we of him." 777

Of Vedda heroes, there was Yapal whose voice could be heard a hundred miles; and Balagala-seya whose arm was like a tree, who carried a bow the girth of a man's thigh, and whose arrow would go through anything; in yonder Balagala rock he lived. 773

Their dead they cover with leaves and abandon where they die, or deposit in shallow graves covered over with earth and thorns to keep the pigs away. 764

Kauwa never bathed; he confirmed the assertion by rubbing rolls of dirt off his abdomen. "Does your wife not complain," we asked. "If she did," was the characteristic reply, "I would strike her with my axe-head, and ask her why she did not think of that when she came to me." 515

Vedda nuptials are not burdened with ritual: A prospective husband, having gained the consent of the girl's parents, returns a few days later, it may be with a friend, and perhaps a monitor or two. Placing his bow and arrows on the roof of the hut, he enters. All partake of the feast of lizards and yams; the girl, seated next to her man, doles out his food, not partaking of a morsel until he has fed, and she has given him a chew of betel and water to wash his hands. The man usually throws in his lot with his father-in-law, but sometimes he takes the girl away, leaving a couple of arrows behind in exchange. The girl's parents may accompany them some distance saying by way of adieu, "Take our child and keep her well." In custom we may differ from these wild and simple folk, but in affection and solicitude are one. 583 585 591

582 The correct Vedda marriage is that between the children of a brother
835 and sister. A marriage between children of two brothers or of two sisters is regarded as incest. And here their standard is higher than ours.

587 Marriage for the Vedda is a very simple affair. Suthubanda, for instance, espoused a widow in his household. When she was freed by the death of her husband, it was right that he should take her, and he made no demur, though she was old and ugly and he young and robust.
583 Kaurala went to the younger of his two wives with a length of cloth, a bead necklace, a bangle and two hair pins, and brought her away. Gama, whose wife was an orphan of Henebedde, did much the same. But
591 the rule is that a man should cast in his lot with his wife's people. Then, the morning after marriage the pair go into the jungle and bring home, it may be a *kanava* comb, a monitor lizard, or some yams, and thus the common life begins.

585 The waist-string plays as important a part in Vedda matrimony as
291 does the ring in ours. When a woman has tied round the waist of a man a string of her own twisting, he becomes her husband. This string, some
[283 six encircling loops, lasting practically a life-time, is made of *niyande*
824] (bow-string hemp), the long bayonet-shaped leaf of which is shredded to fibre by being drawn repeatedly between the palm of the hand and a bare branch.

586 Divorce is as informal as marriage; the woman being merely returned to her parents or requested to go to whomsoever she chooses. But the Vedda is not, as a rule, unreasonably capricious in the exercise of his power; he has too great a sense of responsibility and of fair-play towards
762 the mother of his children and partner in his toil. A lad I knew blew out his chest with a gun, from remorse at having taken to himself two sisters who continually quarrelled with each other over his affections.

593 A Vedda will not hesitate to chastise his spouse when necessary; but that, after all, is only a mark of affection! We saw one belabour his wife unmercifully because she would not let him accompany us; she took all the beating she got, but had her own way in the end.

551 These people do not address their women-folk by name. Ask a man to
515 name his children, and he will stutter and stumble at the task. A Vedda hails his wife somewhat as follows: "What are you doing there? Come here and break my head." This apparently suicidal request is only his way of requesting her to perform the delightful uxorial duty of cleansing his hair of vermin.

614 The Veddas of Bingoda claim to be of the Morana *waruge*, the best
565 Vedda clan. Those of Danigala, of the Unapane clan, come next. But
515 for the Veddas of Henebedde the Bingoda folk profess disdain, calling them *Uro* (swine) and *Waliyo*, and saying it was their duty in old-time to pour water on the Morana's hands when they had fed. How much water these Moranas themselves use we have yet to learn; for, if the saying be true, that the worse the odour the better the Vedda, then the Veddas of Bingoda are aristocrats. What a thing is human nature after all, when even this wretched little remnant of humanity, without a rag to their bodies claim social precedence over each other?

614 There are nine Vedda clans or *waruges*; and each has its own story:

173 The Morana *waruge* was so called by a Sinhalese king who yearned for the *mora* fruit when it was out of season, and had his want proclaimed.